

REMARKS

Upon entry of the present Amendment, claims 5-7 and 9 are all the claims pending in the application. Claims 1-4, 8, and 10-19 are cancelled without prejudice or disclaimer.

Dealing with preliminary matters first, Applicant notes that the Examiner has not indicated acceptance of the drawings submitted on September 16, 2003. Accordingly, the Examiner is kindly requested to indicate acceptance of these drawings in the next action.

To summarize the Office Action, claims 1-4, 10-13, 15 and 19 have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being allegedly unpatentable over Shimmura (U.S. Patent No. 6,603,934) in view of Hanada et al. (U.S. Patent No. 4,847,657, hereinafter "Hanada"), claim 14 has been rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being allegedly unpatentable over Shimmura and Hanada, further in view of Oogi (U.S. Patent No. 5,974,276), claim 16 has been rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being allegedly unpatentable over Shimmura and Hanada, further in view of Suzuki (U.S. Patent No. 6,853,817), claim 17 has been rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being allegedly unpatentable over Shimmura in view of Hanada, further in view of Bresina et al. (U.S. Patent No. 5,258,810, hereinafter "Bresina"), and claims 8 and 18 have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being allegedly unpatentable over Shimmura in view of Hamada, further in view of Yoshida et al. (JP 8-289148). Further, the Examiner indicates that claim 9 is allowed and claims 5-7 are objected to as being dependent upon a rejected base claims, but would be allowable if rewritten in independent form including all the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims. The outstanding rejections are addressed below.

Claim Rejections - 35 U.S.C. § 103

As noted above, claims 1-4, 10-13, 15 and 19 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being allegedly unpatentable over Shimmura in view of Hanada. Without commenting substantively on this ground of rejection, Applicant submits that the rejection of claims 1-4, 10-13, 15 and 19 is moot in view of the cancellation of these claims without prejudice or disclaimer.

Claim 14 stands rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being allegedly unpatentable over Shimmura and Hanada, further in view of Oogi. Without commenting substantively on this ground of rejection, Applicant submits that the rejection of claim 14 is moot in view of the cancellation of this claim without prejudice or disclaimer.

Claim 16 stands rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being allegedly unpatentable over Shimmura in view of Hanada, further in view of Suzuki. Without commenting substantively on this ground of rejection, Applicant submits that the rejection of claim 16 is moot in view of the cancellation of this claim without prejudice or disclaimer.

Claim 17 stands rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being allegedly unpatentable over Shimmura in view of Hanada, further in view of Bresina. Without commenting substantively on this ground of rejection, Applicant submits that the rejection of claim 17 is moot in view of the cancellation of this claim without prejudice or disclaimer.

Claims 8 and 18 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being allegedly unpatentable over Shimmura in view of Hamada, further in view of Yoshida et al. (JP 8-289148). Without

commenting substantively on this ground of rejection, Applicant submits that the rejection of claims 8 and 18 is moot in view of the cancellation of this claim without prejudice or disclaimer.

Claims 5-7 and 9

As indicated above, the Examiner states that claims 5-7 are objected to for depending upon a rejected base claim. By the present Amendment, dependent claims 5 and 6 are respectively amended in independent form to incorporate all the limitations of claim 1. Therefore, claims 5 and 6 are believed to be allowable. Further, dependent claim 7 is believed to be allowable by virtue of depending from claim 6.

Finally, Applicant again notes that the Examiner has indicated that independent claim 9 is allowed. Therefore, allowance of claims 5-7 and 9 is respectfully requested.

Conclusion

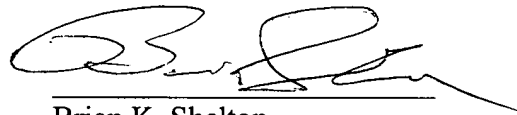
In view of the above, reconsideration and allowance of this application are now believed to be in order, and such actions are hereby solicited. If any points remain in issue which the Examiner feels may be best resolved through a personal or telephone interview, the Examiner is kindly requested to contact the undersigned attorney at the telephone number listed below.

AMENDMENT UNDER 37 C.F.R. § 1.111
U.S. Application No. 10/662,963

Q77154

The USPTO is directed and authorized to charge all required fees, except for the Issue Fee and the Publication Fee, to Deposit Account No. 19-4880. Please also credit any overpayments to said Deposit Account.

Respectfully submitted,



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